


FINANCE COMMITTEE
Town of Grafton

30 Providence Road

Grafton, MA 01519

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Minutes
Finance Committee

Public Meeting/Public Hearing

Finance Committee Conference Room

Wednesday, April 29, 2015

7:00 P.M.

Public Meeting

The public meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by Chair Dave Libbey at:

Finance Committee

Present: Dave Libbey, Lisa Rice, Don Davison, Jennifer Dorazio, Lisa Brovelli Kelley, Heather McCue(7:02 P.M.), Sue Robbins, Joel Schwendemann

Absent: Denise Nault

Present: Assistant Town Administrator Doug Willardson, Board of Assessors members Drew Manlove, Marsha Platt, Ken Grew

Review and discussion of Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles 5 and 6

Review and discussion of Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles 5 and 6 with the Members of the Board of Assessors and the Assistant Town Administrator. Finance Committee Chair Dave Libbey met with Assessor Drew Manlove today to discuss these articles.

Drew Manlove, Principle Assessor opened discussion of Special Town Meeting Warrant articles:

- General review and obligation to the state for these types of transactions relative to uniformity of process
- The Town is entitled to charge property tax and personal property tax
- Methodology for computing personal property tax is in place

Tax starts high and diminishes each year as personal property is valued.

Real estate taxes are minimal due to Chapter 61A

- These contracts are written as a 20 year project and there is no cap by the DOR.
- The Board of Assessors recommended the dollar amount.
- The Town Administrator's office negotiated the contract.
- Each year, a form of lists are required by state law and it is in the contract with the Town.
- Marsh Platt stated that the Board of Assessors had nothing to do with the Follette St. project.

Finance Committee April 29, 2015 Public Meeting

Ken Grew would like to focus on Special Warrant Article 6:

- the calculation methodology is incorrect.
- State Law- in lieu of taxes, fair and full value can be applied. the project has a value of \$7.1 million dollars
- Drew Manlove does not agree and stated that this is not an appropriate figure to begin the 1st year of value.
- Ken Grew thinks that the rest of the Board of Assessors needs to be better informed.

Chair of the Finance Committee Dave Libbey

- It is not Finance Committee's job to judicate the responsibilities of another board.
- If this is the range in the other communities-stop debating

If Board of Assessors revisit this and changes their vote, Finance Committee needs to know.

Special Warrant Article 5

Reviewed on: 4/22/2015

Reviewed on: 4/27/2015

Reviewed with Assessors on Wednesday, 4/29/2015

Voted on: April 29, 2015

Motion: Lisa Rice moved that the Finance Committee recommend passage of Article 5.

Seconded: Lisa Brovelli Kelley. All in favor. Motion carries.

Prepared Blurb: Dave Libbey 4/27/2015

Article 5

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 5.

This agreement provides a predictable tax revenue pattern for both the facility operator and the Town. The duration and tax rate follow practices recommended by the Department of Revenue, are consistent with those employed in other towns, have been recommended by the Board of Assessors and have been approved by the Board of Selectmen.

New Blurb prepared by Dave Libbey for review on 4/29/2015. This recommendation was based on a draft memo from the Assistant Town Administrator

Article 5

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 5.

The Town is entitled to collect real property taxes on the land occupied by a solar field and personal property taxes on the solar generating equipment. The assessment and collection of real property taxes will take place using the normal Town real estate tax process and are not affected by this article. Without the agreement proposed in this article, the personal property tax would decline annually over the lifetime of the solar panels. This agreement provides a predictable, level personal property tax revenue pattern for both the facility operator and the Town. The duration and tax rate recommended in the article follow practices recommended by the Department of Revenue, are consistent with those employed in other towns, have been recommended by the Board of Assessors and have been approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Special Warrant Article 6

Reviewed on: 4/22/2015

Reviewed on: 4/27/2015

Reviewed with Assessors on Wednesday, 4/29/2015

Voted on: April 29, 2015

Motion: Lisa Rice moved that the Finance Committee recommend passage of Article 6 as written

Seconded: Lisa Brovelli Kelley.

Discussion points:

Consider revisiting solar fields in the near future to assess the range of tax rate.

All in favor. Motion carries

Prepared Blurb: Dave Libbey

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Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles were reviewed and determined that voting was completed.

Recommendations were finalized as follows:

Article 1

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 1 in the amount of \$91,672.00.

These transfers result in no additional spending and adjust the FY15 budget to reflect updated estimates and spending within the departments noted. The Finance Committee believes that these transfers appropriately reflect changing circumstances.

Article 2

The Finance Committee opposes passage of Article 2.

The Committee understands that there are no adjustments required to the FY15 Sewer Enterprise Fund budget and that the motion at the Special Town Meeting will be to pass over this article.

Article 3

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 3.

Finance Committee supports Article 3 to balance the FY15 Snow and Ice Account.

Article 4

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 4 in the amount of \$1,121.46.

This action requires a nine-tenths vote at Town Meeting.

Article 5

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Article 7

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 7 in the amount of \$9,000.000.

This article transfers funds from Fire Department Personnel Services to the Fire Department Retirement account.

Article 8

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 8 not to exceed \$50,000.00.

This article will open an account for the School Department to maintain its iPad program by allowing for sales of older equipment and purchase of newer.

Article 9

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 9 not to exceed \$10,000.00.

This article will allow the Library Department to open an account for the purchase of materials sold to library users.

Article 10

Finance Committee recommends passage of this article in the amount of \$92,000.00.

This is required in order to comply with the original restoration terms of the contract between the Town and the Grafton Lions Club for the use of the Lions Club property for the Lake Ripple Dredging Project.

Article 11

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 11 in the amount of \$753,321.00.

This article amends an amount for State-Aid Highway funding. It is the result of an additional amount of funding from the State's Transportation Bond Bill.

Article 12

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 12 in the amount of \$2,814.00.

This article satisfies the Community Preservation Act requirement to reserve 10% of Community Preservations Act funds for affordable housing purposes. It is the result of a larger than expected State match.

Article 13

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 13 in the amount of \$2,814.00. This article satisfies the Community Preservation Act requirement to reserve 10% of Community Preservations Act funds for open space purposes. It is the result of a larger than expected State match.

Article 14

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 14 in the amount of \$2,814.00. This article satisfies the Community Preservation Act requirement to reserve 10% of Community Preservations Act funds for historical preservation purposes. It is the result of a larger than expected State match.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

Article 5

Figures reviewed determining that the new School budget figure for FY16 is \$30,242,955.00 and the recommendation was reviewed.

Article 19

Recommendation was reviewed.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles were reviewed and determined that voting was completed.

Recommendations were finalized as follows:

Article 1

The Finance Committee recommends acceptance of the printed annual and any other reports.

Article 2

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 2.

Article 3

Finance Committee recommends passage of this article in the amount of \$772,353.00. This is the Town's share of the net operating cost of the Blackstone Valley Regional School District, and reflects a slight decrease in enrollment from last year of Grafton students.

Article 4

Finance Committee recommends passage of this article in the amount of \$57,067.00. This appropriation will fund the principal and interest cost for the FY16 Blackstone Valley Regional School District capital expansion project.

Article 5

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 5 in the amount of \$50,804,305.00. Article 5 funds the operating budget of the various town departments through anticipated operating revenue such as property taxes, local receipts, and state aid. It represents a \$1,834,985.00 or 3.5% increase over the FY2015 budget. The budget proposed in this Article is the result of significant effort and review among the Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Department Heads and Committees. This process has produced a responsible budget that fully supports all town departments and services.

Article 6

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 6 in the amount of \$1,511,270.00.

Article 6 funds the capital expense budget for FY2016. The projects proposed in this article are those recommended by the Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC) using an established evaluation and rating process.

Article 7

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 7 as presented.

This article permanently reduces the age eligibility to qualify for certain exemptions beginning July 1, 2015.

Article 8

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 8 as presented.

This article will permanently provide for an additional real estate tax exemption for taxpayers for blind persons, veterans, surviving spouses and seniors beginning July 1, 2015.

Article 9

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 9 as presented.

This article will permanently provide a real estate tax exemption for taxpayers who are members of the National Guard or Military Reservists serving on active duty outside of the United States beginning July 1, 2015.

Article 10

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 10 in an amount not to exceed \$1,000.00.

It is important that the Town protect the wages of our Call Fire Department fire fighters in case of injury while in service to the Town.

Article 11

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 11.

This article allows the Treasurer/Collector to conduct routine Town business.

Article 12

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 12 in the amount of \$45,000.00.

This article allows funds to be added to the Unemployment Compensation Account.

Article 13

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 13.

This is the annual reauthorization of revolving accounts.

Article 14

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 14.

This article will accomplish three goals:

1. Put in writing what the department is already doing.
2. Brings the Sewer Department within State guidelines.
3. Improves eligibility for no interest funding for the expansion project.

Article 15

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 15.

This article is an annual authorization to request FY16 WRTA funding of transportation services.

Article 16

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 16 in the amount of \$500,043.00.

This article allows the Town to receive Chapter 90 funds as a reimbursement for projects accepted by the provisions of the Transportation Bond Bill. The spending of these funds is under the direction of the Board of Selectmen.

Article 17

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 17.

This article allows the Board of Selectmen to conduct routine Town business.

Article 18

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 18.

Finance Committee understands that there are no surplus items to sell at this time.

Article 19

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 19.

To date, bids for the property have not been received.

Article 20

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 20.

The Grafton Water District wants to develop a well on a parcel they own, but the site is not suitable for a pump station. The Town owns a nearby parcel on Powerline Drive that the Grafton Water District would like to lease for 30 years to build a pump station with construction to begin later this summer. It is our understanding that the parcel is not suitable for building more than the pump station. The Town is currently negotiating appropriate compensation with the Grafton Water District. The Finance Committee believes that this lease agreement is a prudent arrangement for the Town.

Article 21

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 21.

The intent of this article is to transfer Hilltop Farms settlement money to the Affordable Housing Trust account.

Article 22

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 22.

Article 22 corrects the language contained in the existing easement document, thereby clarifying the Town's access to the dam at Lake Ripple. No funding is required for this article.

Article 23

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 23.

Grafton cemeteries are not parks or open space. The Grafton cemeteries are burial grounds, hallowed and set aside for one specific purpose.

Article 24

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 24 in the amount of \$10,000.00.

This article is a required transfer of funds from Community Preservation Committee (CPC) revenues into an Operating budget account. This is necessary for the CPC to conduct routine business in FY16.

Article 25

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 25 in the amount of \$90,825.00.

This article authorizes the CPC to make the FY16 principle and interest payment on the bond issued for the Pell Farm property.

Article 26

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 26 in the amount of \$73,617.00.

This article authorizes the CPC to make the FY16 principle and interest payment on the \$1.1 million bond issued for the renovation of the Grafton Town House.

Article 27

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 27 in the amount of \$44,958.00.

The funds to support Grafton Affordable Housing Trust activities have been provided by transfers from the CPA Affordable Housing Reserve over several years.

Article 28

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 28 in the amount of \$18,000.00. These funds will be used to restore the original main entrance doors and the exterior boiler room door. This expenditure is in keeping with the intention of the Community Preservation Act.

Article 29

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 29 in the amount of \$3,640.00. These funds will be used to bring back the original swing out garage doors. This expenditure is in keeping with the intention of the Community Preservation Act.

Article 30

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 30 in the amount of \$60,000.00. The assessed value of the land is \$80,000.00. The total purchase price is \$70,000.00. The Grafton Land Trust is contributing the additional \$10,000.00. The Finance Committee understands that the land to be acquired through Article 30 will improve protection of ecologically significant wetlands, will protect important animal habitat, and will connect existing Town and Land Trust properties. No new taxpayer funding is required.

Article 31

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 31 in the amount of \$100,000.00 by a 4-3 vote.

This article provides initial funding for Phase I of the Super Park. This expenditure is in keeping with the intention of the Community Preservation Act.

Article 32

Finance Committee opposes passage of Article 32.

The Town has a multi-million dollar capital project backlog. These funds could be applied toward several of these projects. Further, the Super Park project has not been ranked through the Capital Improvement Planning Committee's process to assess its relative priority.

Article 33

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 33.

Article 34

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 34.

Article 35

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 35.

The borrowing capacity discussed in this article was created for the new High School building project to cover the State's contribution to the project's cost as required by law. Since the State has paid for its portion of the project, this capacity is no longer needed. It is good financial practice to rescind unneeded borrowing capacity.

Article 36

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 36 as presented.

This article will eliminate a conflict between state law and the Grafton Zoning By-Laws(ZBL). The change allows riding stables and similar uses in all zones with site plan review, provided that the lot is at least 5 acres and certain other conditions are satisfied.

Article 37

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 37 as presented.

This article updates the ZBL to refer to the current GIS-based electronic zoning map for all zoning districts other than Flood Plain, which is defined by FEMA maps.

Article 38

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 38 as presented.

This article clarifies sign requirements for which the Planning Board may grant relief by special permit. It does not change the circumstances under which the Board can grant relief.

Article 39

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 39 as presented.

This amends the zoning map to add a 96-acre industrial parcel at 105 Westboro Road to the Chapter 43D Priority Development Site Overlay District, and to rezone from industrial to R-20 (residential) another parcel of the same owner at 36 Nelson Street. This will provide increased incentives for commercial development of the 105 Westboro Road parcel.

Article 40

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 40 as presented.

This amends the zoning bylaw to incorporate, as stated in Article 39, the addition of 105 Westboro Road to the Chapter 43D Priority Development Site Overlay District. This provides economic development incentives including expedited permitting and access to state grants and resources

Article 41

Finance Committee opposes passage of this article.

Finance Committee understands that the Planning Board will hold a public hearing on this article on May 4, 2015. Finance Committee will reconsider this article at the May 11, 2015 Town Meeting.

Article 42

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 42 as presented.

This article will rezone 65 N. Main St. from residential to neighborhood business, to be consistent with properties abutting and across the street, which are already zoned neighborhood business.

State of the Town Message

- Review of the State of the Town Message version submitted by Joel Schwendemann
- Review of the entire document:
Line by line review.
included edits and additions to the document.

Bills for Review

- Holden Landmark Corporation for March 2015 Special Town Meeting reprints of the articles and recommendations.

Motion: Joel Schwendemann moved that the Finance Committee approve payment in the amount of \$100.00 from Holden Landmark Corporation.

Seconded: Lisa Brovelli Kelley. All in favor. Motion carries.

- Holden Landmark Corporation journal entry to be approved to be applied to the Finance Committee budget in the amount of \$189.00. This bill was erroneously paid by the Board of Selectmen.

Motion: Lisa Brovelli-Kelley moved that the Finance Committee approve payment in the amount of \$189.00.

Seconded: Heather McCue. Motion carries.

Aye	Nay	Absent
Dave Libbey	Don Davison	Denise Nault
Lisa Rice		

Jennifer Dorazio
Lisa Brovelli Kelley
Heather McCue
Sue Robbins
Joel Schwendemann

- Staples bill for the purchase of printer cartridges

Motion: Lisa Brovelli Kelley moved that the Finance Committee approve payment in the amount of \$93.99.

Seconded: Sue Robbins. All in favor. Motion carries

- Pepperoni Express for lunches purchased for the 2 Finance Committee Saturday meetings held in March 2015. Payment includes gratuity.

Motion: Lisa Brovelli Kelley moved that the Finance Committee approve payment in the total amount of \$184.55.

Seconded: Sue Robbins. All in favor. Motion carries.

Reprints for May 2015 Town meetings

- It is confirmed to order 100 reprints of the warrant with recommendations.

Member Topics:

- Sue Robbins suggested that Finance Committee purchases a "Finance Committee" name plate
- Council on Aging revolving fund

Lisa Brovelli Kelley briefly reviewed the requested document with the Finance Committee.

Reorganize of the Finance Committee

- Discussion of the reorganization
- Dress rehearsal meeting date

No date has been scheduled thus far

Lisa Rice considers a dress rehearsal to be a waste of time.

Sue Robbins stated that past dress rehearsal meetings required a full review of final budget figures.

A public meeting of the Finance Committee will be posted for Saturday, May 09, 2015.

- There will not be a need for a public meeting of the Finance Committee on Thursday, April 30, 2015

The posted meeting will be cancelled by the Finance Committee Assistant per the Town Clerk's office.

- Schedule for posting the Recommendations in the designated areas around Town and in The Grafton News

Posting will take place on Friday, May 01, 2015.

Adjournment

Motion: Don Davison moved that the Finance Committee close its public meeting.

Seconded: Heather McCue. All in favor. Motion carries.

The public meeting of the Finance Committee adjourned at 9:24 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Fiacco